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ABSTRACT

This report describes the successful planning, development, and operation of a desegregated public elementary school in Providence, Rhode Island. Planning involved school system personnel and all segments of an ethnically mixed community. Physical structure and operation of the school were determined in response to educational needs and desires expressed by the community. This school has provided a model for other public schools in the area, which have adopted elements of the program and procedures of the school. (Author/DM)

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PRS 006
A Report by the Program Reference Service

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Community Involvement in School Desegregation

The Story of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. School / Providence, Rhode Island

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Foreword

This report describes the successful planning, development, and operation of a desegregated public elementary school, the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. school in Providence, Rhode Island.

The planning for this school involved both school system personnel and all segments of an ethnically mixed community. The total planning effort was the largest in the history of the school system.

How the school operates and its physical structure were in good measure determined in response to educational needs and desires expressed by the community. The King school is highly respected; it represents a source of pride to the community it serves. The unique development of this school has provided a model for other public schools in and around the city of Providence. Many schools in the area have adopted elements of the program and procedures in use at the King school. The school program may not be as pedagogically spectacular as some that have been developed elsewhere during this period. Nonetheless, the success of a program of public education should be measured, in large part, in terms of the setting in which it occurs. This school is an example of positive public education activity.

Richard P. Boardman

February 1971

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The Center for Urban Education, an independent nonprofit corporation, was founded in 1965. The following year it was designated a Regional Educational Laboratory under the Cooperative Research Act. It is funded mainly by the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare through the Office of Education, but also contracts with other government agencies, state and local as well as federal, and with business firms and community agencies. The Center designs, field-tests, and disseminates alternatives to the traditional practices of formal education and citizen participation.

Under the direction of its Dissemination Division, the Center publishes a wide variety of reports, monographs, books, and bibliographies. A complete list of those items in print is available on request.

The development of the Program Reference Service was made possible by a grant to the Center from the National Center for Educational Communication, U.S. Office of Education.

As a unit of the Dissemination Division, the Program Reference Service identified, examined, and provided information on programs in grades K-6 which deal with the problems of urban school systems. Its reports have been designed to meet the stated needs of school administrators and other educational decision-makers, and are offered as informational aids to effective educational planning. This report was prepared under the direction of Joseph Pincus.

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The Setting

Providence, Rhode Island is the central city in a small state, and with its adjacent city, Pawtucket, constitutes the major metropolitan area for the southeastern corner of New England. It has a population of about 185,000. In 1969 the public school system of Providence contained 39 elementary schools, eight junior high or middle schools and four high schools, and a total enrollment of about 26,700 pupils. Twenty percent of this public school population is black. Upwards of 25 percent of the city's school-aged population attends nonpublic schools.

The city of Providence is divided into several residential sections. Almost 80 percent of the black population lives in an area known as the South Side. Federal Hill is the traditional Italian-American community; in the East Side, poor and rich, liberal and conservative, black and white live in proximity, though separated by both man made and natural barriers. (About 11 percent of the East Side is black.) It was in the physically and socially complex East Side of Providence that the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. School was developed.[1]

The replacement school

In February of 1963, the Providence School Committee placed on its agenda the matter of replacing two older East Side school buildings, the Doyle Avenue and Jenkins Street schools. Individual East Side residents had for a number of years quietly urged the replacement of these facilities. The Committee acted at this time because both schools, in terms of age and location, had finally been placed on the citywide replacement priority list. The normal procedure of the School Committee was to bring forward and act on a traditional school construction program developed and used with slight modification during the decade of the fifties. Such a

[1] This school was originally the Lippitt Hill School and was renamed in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in April of 1968.

procedure included referring to a standard set of school building specifications, which included conventional two-story brick, 24-room facilities to house grades K-6. Virtually every elementary school constructed in Providence during the fifties was developed in this way by the central school administration office.

The East Side community was far from traditional, however. The East Side Schools had very different compositions. The two schools to be replaced containing 98 and 88 percent non-whites, while the remaining two schools in the predominantly white areas contained 65 and 32 percent non-whites. The total population of the East Side at this period was approximately 31,500, of which approximately 11 percent was non-white. The total school enrollment in the four public elementary schools serving the area was 1,612 with about 525 non-white pupils. The proposed replacement school for the two obsolete schools was planned initially to have a capacity of 650. Population projections suggested that the population stability of the area would be maintained in the coming years. (The private schools in the East Side have an enrollment of over 1,700 pupils, not all of whom come from the East Side.)

The community organizes

It was against this background that a group of interested and enlightened residents of the East Side organized themselves as the East Side Neighborhood Council to confront the School Committee. (Many in the community believe that a different and less desirable pattern of school development might have occurred had it not been for the aggressive efforts of one community leader.) They requested a two week delay in the routine approval of the new school plans. There was no previous history of meaningful community involvement in the public schools of this area.

It was the East Side Neighborhood Council that consistently provided the stimulus for educational quality on the East Side, although other community groups were developed, and assisted in area educational matters. The specific assets of the East Side population were brought into play: the educationally enlightened college community segment largely connected with Brown University; the large business and professional community which was trying to preserve the residential core of the area; and the black community of the East Side, which had been located in the area for several generations and is the original black settlement in the city.

Prior to 1963, the mood of the community on education matters had sometimes been one of apathy, and sometimes one of patience and trust; the black community occasionally expressed a quiet frustration over the education of their young. The white liberal segment of the East Side community, moved by the growing national concern about integration, provided the catalyst for the initial confrontation with the School Committee. However, a representative cross section of the community was involved throughout the planning and development of the new school.

A six month delay

At a second meeting of the School Committee two weeks later, still back in 1963, the East Side community turned out in force. *(R 1)* Reports by community leaders and their consultants described the demographic and educational characteristics of the community, and showed the ways in which the traditional school proposed for the site would not meet the community's requirements. *(R 2)* This extraordinary community performance achieved a six month delay in the final approval of the school plan. Equally significant was the appointment of a principal for the new school in advance of its construction to help in the study of the problems and

develop programs. This was unheard of in the Providence school system, which traditionally announced the principal for a new school at the time of the building's opening. Involving the administrative staff of a new school in the planning process of that school was a first in the history of the Providence school system. The community in this instance played a major part in the actual selection of a particular individual to be the principal of the new school.

Lippitt Hill Tutorial

At about the same time a segment of the community initially largely white, recognizing the educational deprivations imposed on the black pupils in the community, formed the Lippitt Hill Tutorial Incorporated. *(R 6)* The purpose of the organization was to assist in the education of the disadvantaged pupils in the community. Those who formed the group foresaw that if a new school facility were to be built with an aggressive program stressing academic excellence for all the youngsters of the East Side, considerable remedial work would have to be done with the community's black youngsters so that their placement in the new school would not yield a segregation similar to that which the mere location of the older physical facilities then provided. The fact that there would be one school in place of two, that a new type of school was to be built meant that there would be desegregation in the East Side at the primary level.

Lippitt Hill Tutorial began its activities by placing volunteer students from Brown University and Pembroke College in the Doyle Avenue school after the regular day to tutor pupils with school work problems. The school system through the principal designate, located then in the Doyle Avenue school, allowed the tutorial activity to function and provided limited space fc the association to operate. Initially the school system only tolerated the tutorial effort. However, the principal-designate did justify the activi-

ties of the community association to the State Education Department, which also demanded an explanation of the tutorial activities and evidence as to why they were not in violation of a state law prohibiting the presence of non-professionals in public schools. The first year (1963-64) school-community relationship was best described as a period of confrontation and toleration. Faith, trust and confidence developed slowly with accomplishment. The initial success of the Lippitt Hill Tutorial, together with the activities of the East Side Neighborhood Council, were the important accomplishments of the community during this period.

The activities of the community were not carried out without resistance. Initial reaction was voiced by members of the School Committee who, representing other areas of the city, saw the alteration of conventional planning procedures as allowing special treatment for one particular area of the city over another. However, the additional six month planning period gave the community time to make clear that the new East Side school would have to be different because it made sound educational sense. To the amazement of some within its own ranks, the School Department indeed seemed to address itself well to the challenge hurled by the community and the report of its consultants.

During the six month planning period the School Committee asked the Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education, the principal-designate, and an elementary supervisor to look into community complaints and recommendations and to develop plans and programs for the new school.

Three reports

The first of three reports was developed in August, 1963 by the principal-designate and the elementary supervisor. *(R 3)* It dealt with curriculum development in the proposed school and urged the adoption of a

series of special programs and architectural modifications. The report advocated interim special programs in the Doyle and Jenkins Street schools during the period of new school construction. These included full time guidance counselling, community liaison activities, a teacher selection and retraining program, preschool programs, summer programs, and adult education. The architectual modifications included enlarged resource centers, moveable walls, and preschool facilities.

For the second of the three reports the School Committee commissioned a sociological study of the demographic and educational changes and demands of the East Side community in order to provide an adequate

social basis upon which to plan the developing school. *(R 4)* The report, completed in the summer of 1963, was based on parent interviews and a review of census information and existing reports. It started with a consideration of the problems and prospects of developing a new school in a segregated community. This brought out in the open the emerging concern over school desegregation in a number of Providence areas including the East Side. Considering the year, late in 1963, the forcefulness of the report is remarkable. It contains a clarity absent in many of the more recent efforts in this area. For example:

> A commitment to meaningful integration in the public schools of Providence means believing in the values of integrated education at all levels, even the elementary level. It means believing that these values outrank other values. In short, acts favoring integration must be judged in terms of a hierarchy of values clearly defined, clearly expressed, clearly understood by all people involved; in the Lippitt Hill situation, this means whites as well as Negroes, District residents as well as non-residents. Acts according to values to maintain integration as well as changes for integration may disturb and upset some traditional patterns, some groups, and some people. Similar adjustments in other situations have been made and continue to be made constantly and willingly by people who really understand that they are asked to act, and are acting in terms of higher values than may ordinarily guide their behavior. *(R 1)*

The Providence school system emerged among the first in the northeast to address the issue of school desegregation directly in terms of a comprehensive plan for the entire city. It was the East Side community and its continuing concern for educational excellence which brought about this initial school desegregation in Providence, perhaps several years prior to its expected development.

The second report concluded that the proposed East Side school be developed in line with present and future social and demographic con-

siderations indicated by the East Side Neighborhood Council. The report, substantiating the Council's concerns, recommended many programs the community advocated; the evidence against a traditional school facility for the East Side was mounting.

In November of 1963, the third report, a statement of educational objectives for the school, was developed by the principal-designate and elementary supervisor. *(R 5, R 9)* The Ford Foundation provided outside funding to continue the planning process. Members of the Providence system staff, the principal-designate, the architect and the elementary supervisor visited several of the more advanced school programs and facilities in the country. In the visiting and data collection activities, cooperation was enlisted from the Educational Facilities Laboratory *(R 8)*, a New York City-based private, non-profit, educational research organization and a subsidiary of the Ford Foundation. As a result, there were recommendations for changes in the proposed physical plant.

Never before in the history of the Providence public schools had so much planning gone into the development of a single elementary school. Midway in January of 1964 the six month planning period was completed and the school committee authorized the architects to submit a revised set of plans for the school, incorporating virtually all of the recommendations of both the School Committee planners and the community.

Integration of East Side schools

The school facility which finally emerged was designed to house grades K-6. In fact, what finally was decided was a K-3 organization. The decision to adopt the K-3 organization was not settled until the spring of 1967, after the basic educational specifications had been developed, approved and construction begun. The decisive factor in determining the organization of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. school as a K-3 com-

munity school serving the entire East Side community was the prospect of insuring the integration of all East Side schools. Some black residents in the immediate area of the school expressed concern; they wanted assurances that the new school would be 'their school.' Such assurances, that the school would be a community school servicing the immediate black community as well as the larger community, seemed to reduce the tension. In addition, desegregation plans were proceeding in the rest of the city.

To make the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. school an East Side district school, an elaborate redistricting plan had to be developed. What evolved was a district wide reorganization, involving the King school and two other East Side Schools that became grades 4-6 units. Because of parent concern, neighborhood kindergarten classes were retained initially in the grades 4-6 units. However, kindergarten class size in these schools was gradually diminished as word of the benefits of the King kindergarten classes spread throughout the community. As of 1970-71, there are no kindergartens in the two grade 4-6 units.

Redistricting required busing programs for all grade K-3 pupils who lived beyond walking distance to the King school. The school's busing program now includes kindergarten youngsters, although this was not part of the original plan. Since the school is located in a predominantly non-white residential area of the East Side, most of the youngsters who are bused are white. Both the busing of whites for integration and the busing of kindergarten age youngsters are important aspects in the success of the King school design.

The Building

The final cost of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. school was 1.75 million dollars. This figure was 500 thousand dollars above the most expensive elementary school previously constructed by the Providence school system.

Adequacy of plant

Considerable measure of program success can be attributed to the adequacy of the physical plant. In addition to many of the standard elementary school facilities, the King school has office space for the community school and tutorial activities. The school is constructed as a series of six brick buildings with broad sloping roofs, residential in style. One building houses the "cafetorium" (auditorium and cafeteria) with a stage, another the gymnasium which is available for day and evening programs. The administrative wing contains the offices of the principal and secretary, and medical and dental facilities.

Classrooms

Classroom facilities are of three types. The first of these, available for Levels I and II, is the learning center. Learning centers are large carpeted rooms, about the size of four standard classrooms, 4500 square feet including the normal center hall area, accommodating approximately 120 pupils and appropriate staff.

Usually these rooms are divided into four primary sections grouped around a resource center, and several smaller sections depending upon the particular learning tasks of the moment. Upon entering a learning center one finds a bustle of activity, movement and sound. Brief association with the center, however, reveals a constructive, organized pattern of learning activities. Unlike the traditional classroom, the teacher in the learning center is initially difficult to locate, since many activities are in progress at the same time.

A second kind of classroom facility is best described as two conventional classrooms (about 900 square feet each) linked by a folding partition, which, when rolled back, creates a large room for multi-purpose activities where larger group activities could be carried out. One may find the wall open or closed depending again on the activities of the classes.

Staff willingness to work with larger groups of pupils also plays a part in the physical openness of the classrooms. It seems fair to say that some of the King school staff are more comfortable with the more self-contained activities and prefer smaller, more conventional spaces.

The third kind of classroom space at the King school is called the variable size classroom, which is available for special instruction and staffed by the classroom teacher and her assistants. Individualized programs are carried out in these classrooms, most of which are located in close proximity, making movement in and out of them relatively easy. The kindergarten unit, located in a separate building, contains two large rooms one of which may be divided into two parts by a folding wall. The entire complex of buildings is pleasant and bright and well maintained. Playground space has been at a premium, although this is being eased by the city's completion of a playground facility as a physical adjunct to the school.

Materials

Materials for efficient program operation have been adequate but never available in the abundance desired. The program at Martin Luther King does not depend for its success upon sheer abundance and diversity of materials as do some experimental programs. There are perhaps more materials consumed in the program but this is because there is a greater range of activities than in the traditional grades K-3 organization. If pupils are to proceed independently and continually they must have

materials available when needed. The staff has come to feel that the presentation of a consistently developed program which recognizes and deals with the gains and progress of the learner is considerably more stable than one built upon the materials fads of the moment. A program in which teachers come to know the pupils and the kinds of learning experiences that maximize growth, and can provide these experiences, is the goal at the King school. Despite the size of the enrollment, much growth in this direction has been accomplished.

The Staff, The Program, The Pupils

The faculty of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. school was drawn primarily from the staff of the two schools it replaced. By the time the school was opened in September of 1967 a number of complementary programs for teachers' aides and other assistants were underway, spurred by the activities of the Lippitt Hill Tutorial. Student teachers from nearby colleges also participated. Just before opening, a new principal was selected from the teaching staff of the Doyle Avenue School, and the principal-designate, who had contributed so much to the planning and development phase, was promoted to the position of district coordinating principal.

As soon as the final grade structure of the King school was determined, each teacher in the two schools was told of the impending changes, and the continuous progress program was described by the administrative staff. Most of the teachers chose to become a part of the new school. There was no faculty-wide inservice program to educate the staff to continuous progress prior to the opening of the King school. However, the principal and coordinating principal worked informally to alert the staff to the changes in continuous progress. By June of 1967 the staff had been selected and initially prepared; the opening date of September 1967 was set.

By and large, the staff has stayed together and grown together. The only staff departures during the past three years have been due to family transfer, maternity leave, or promotions to other positions, with one teacher receiving a special assignment elsewhere in the Providence system. During the past years, most of the staff have developed a capacity to teach at virtually any level of the elementary program. As the school develops and reorganizes, staff preferences should reflect these broadened skills.

As of the 1970-71 school year, the King school has been reorganized to contain grades K-2. All kindergartens are now located in the school. None exist in other schools. Four of seven third-year teachers in the King school in 1969-70 stayed on in the building or were given new assign-

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ments. Three teachers went to the schools containing grades 3-6 in the East Side district. Additional kindergarten teachers were obtained from closing of kindergartens in other East Side schools.

The growth of staff skills in individual diagnosis and multi-ability group instruction has been notable. Assessing the needs and abilities of pupils and providing experiences and directions for learning are among the most important staff skills needed to operate the school's continuous progress education program. Tireless staff development work by the principal of the school has played a central part in the development of the program. It would seem imperative that in this program the central administrator must have a clear and inclusive picture of its operation and development. This administrator must also be constantly on the scene to implement this program by guiding and coordinating all staff activities.

In addition to basic staff skill and tireless administration, the continuous progress program at the King school has thrived because of the presence and utilization of diversified personnel assistants. It is the feeling of the principal that the program could not function without this help. Tutors who are high school students, educational assistants trained and placed on a voluntary basis in the classroom by Lippitt Hill Tutorial, student teachers, and special educational personnel and reading and guidance specialists all combine to form a team approach to pupil needs and requirements. The stability and consistent quality of this assistance is a prerequisite for meaningful program operation. The community role in the development of the assistant program will be described later in this report.

The pedagogic program for the King school was based on two central assumptions. The first of these was that the learning rate of each child differs and that graded school structures were not sensitive to those differing rates of progress. The goal of the King school was to develop a program which could respond to each pupil's abilities and potential.

Of equal importance was the assumption that the individual pupil should be involved in his own learning through exercising options in both what was learned and the way it was learned. What developed at the King school was a multi-level program of continuous progress learning which incorporated the best features of the observed programs, the administrative skills and talents of the planning staff, and the suggestions and interests of the East Side community. Admittedly eclectic from the outset, continuous progress at the King school is innovative only in its particular application to the pupils of the East Side. All of the methods and materials finally adopted were tried and proven in other areas, yet their collection and application in a Providence public school was seen by some as radical.

A report entitled The Lippitt Hill School, published by the Providence School Committee when the school opened in December, 1967, suggested the following program philosophy for the new school:

> In order to establish a program that will fully satisfy the needs of all children, the course of study is based on the following approach:
>
> 1. Each child has an individual pattern of growth. This growth is not only mental and physical but social and emotional as well.
>
> 2. Rate of growth cannot be subjected to a lockstep of timing. Every child cannot be expected to learn a given segment of work in a designated time.
>
> 3. Social background and heredity dictate that there will be wide variance in interests, capacities, and aptitudes among children.
>
> 4. If a child is to make continuous growth, he must be given instruction and instructional materials which are in keeping with his learning level.
>
> 5. The course of study would take into account the needs of all pupils, and the instructional procedures should be based upon both likenesses and differences within the school population.

6. All children need a balanced program with opportunities for expression and participation. These opportunities may be of an enrichment or remedial nature as each case may dictate.

7. Above all, each child should be allowed to proceed at his own rate of growth; not under pressure, but with encouragement and stimulation.

Three aspects

There are three aspects of the King school program of continuous progress learning. The first and least important of these is the initial diagnosis of pupil potential and capability. Initial diagnosis involves determining for each child, upon entry into the program, both what the child can handle and the ways in which he learns best. This diagnosis involves the classroom teacher, a guidance counselor, and a reading and testing specialist. The school principal is also involved in this process when matters of administration are encountered.

After initial diagnosis comes initial placement, which is based on the results of the diagnosis. This placement is not permanent and can be altered as necessary in terms of the third program component, which is continuous evaluation of pupil progress, the decisive feature. Throughout the program, then, the primary concern is with the pupil, his capabilities, and his movement through the program activities. For the child's growth, positive support is central to the validity of the program.

New approach to grouping

In reviewing the development of this program, it seems clear that the educators involved were certain, regardless of the particular population distribution at the new school, of the value of individualized progress education for elementary age pupils. (In this way they sought to over-

come the pegging of pupils by the ability curve.) The task was to adapt this concept to the particular mix of conditions at the new school. Grouping had, in fact, been tried in the Doyle Avenue and Jenkins Street schools prior to the construction of the King school, to introduce the teaching staff to the new concepts involved in the change from the graded, self-contained classroom. (In fact, there are indications that self-contained classrooms were used despite this concept.) The majority of the staff seemed pleased with the prospect of instituting such procedures in the new setting. The community also supported the individualized approach as developed, and backed the positive, successful orientation to the school experience of the child as the way to achieve quality education.

Realities of program operation

Thus far, some of the assumptions and elements of the ideal program have been described. The realities of operating the program during the first years have proven, in some instances, to be different from the ideal originally sought.

Initial pupil diagnosis and placement procedures have proceeded satisfactorily with good coordination among the professional staff involved. Language placement appears particularly accurate, owing in large part to the reliability of the reading specialist's evaluations. However, expanding enrollments taxed the facility. Teacher loads have developed far beyond original expectations, and staff planning time, so vital to the individualized process, has been reduced to a minimum in order to accommodate additional pupil loads. In 1969-70 the average pupil-teacher ratio for the entire school excluding kindergarten was 34-1. (The ratio for kindergarten was somewhat lower. The kindergarten facility in 1969-70 ran three shifts.)

In the 1970-71 school year, with the reorganization of the school to a K-2 grade structure, some reassignment of staff was necessary. The ex-

change and reassignment of personnel provided a greater coordination and development of program in all the East Side schools. Prior to that time, there had been no such exchange of King school personnel within the East Side or with any other Providence school.

The pupil

For the pupil, continuous progress education is a stimulating experience, one which allows considerably more freedom than the traditional, self-contained graded system. Upon entering the program for the first time, a pupil is placed arbitrarily in a classroom according to age, previous school experience, and the teacher load situation. Pupil background information is considered and weighed in terms of a pupil's previous school experiences. To determine level designation from a graded experience is frequently difficult since a pupil's level or ability is often reported primarily in terms of the offerings of the particular graded system rather than apart from it. A temporary location is continued during which the teacher makes judgments based on work tried and accomplished; an effort is made to locate a pupil so that the majority of his learning tasks can be handled by one teacher. All placement is carried out on the basis of chronological age. A pupil entering Level I must be age 6 by December 31st or age 7 by the same date for Level II, or age 8 on that date for Level III. This is done because it is possible, owing to the large number of pupils in the school at any given level, and because multi-aging has been rejected to date as part of the program. Focusing energies to provide the full range of learning experiences within the age range seemed most satisfactory to the staff. Lengthy controlled experimentation with this and other concepts has not been possible to date, however. Inhouse experimentation of this nature has been reduced by time, money and staff limitations.

Continuous progress

As a pupil moves along through the program, decisions are made as to whether a pupil should stay and grow with one major teacher or be moved along to another. Such a movement may take place at any point during the school year. Teachers who start with four distinct ability groupings of pupils in the fall, may move to as many as seven or eight groups by the end of the year, based on the range of skills of the teacher and on the progress rates of the pupils. The amount of time a student spends in any given level is determined by age. Overcrowding precludes the use of transitional levels, or longer periods of time in any given level.

The attempt is made (and is succesful in most cases) to allow the teacher to grow and progress along with her pupils, rather than have pupils move from teacher to teacher. A group of teachers for a given level may get together to make decisions on how best to divide their labors on this matter. Continuity of a pupil's program is a key factor; this in turn rests on a teacher's skill and range of subject matter competence. Teachers at the King school develop a wide range of skills and abilities which go beyond traditional grade level capacities. Most staff members function equally well in primary, sub-primary or intermediate levels and have developed these skills through following the students' progress.

Pupil placement for the coming academic year is made on the basis of year end conference of teachers and specialists. Recommendations are made to the principal who assigns pupils and teachers. The attempt is made to give each teacher groups of pupils who are within her range of experience. Some placements are problematic and require detailed discussion by both teacher and principal. Pupils take up in the Fall where they left off in the Spring so that continuity is not lost.

Avoiding resegregation

While efforts are made to preserve heterogeneous grouping, homogeneous instruction in some cases necessitates pupil-ability grouping, which might lead to resegregation. Such resegregation is minimized, however, at the present, because several levels operate at the same time, teachers instruct children with a range of abilities, pupils change groups within a level at various times during the day, and there is periodic regrouping of pupils during the year.

These concerns for pupil grouping have been reflected in the desegregation program developed for the South Side of Providence. There, a model school program, patterned after the King school, encompasses a citywide busing program. The question of the impact of the continuous progress program where homogeneous groups exist remains unresolved.

inancing

The question of the financing of this program is obviously important. The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. school is a public school working within the realities of an urban public school system budget. The initial bonding issue which financed both construction and equipment was ample, and an adequate financial base established the school program. Because the program was new, few materials were transferable from the old traditional program and facilties which the King school replaced. Little could be utilized from the grades 4-6 elementary schools on the East Side, since they would be using all of the equipment and materials they already had.

The King school continues to operate within the framework of the city school system budget. Realistic annual budgets are submitted by the principal who reports they are usually supported. The annual budget does not allow the staff to buy and/or experiment with many new materials. The coordinating principal remarks that, given an adequate financial base, it has been possible to buttress adequate funding with administrative ability. The enthusiasm of the staff, he argues, is an important ingredient in program success; it will break down, however, if adequate funding is not maintained. Continuous progress education at the King school costs somewhat more on a per pupil basis than traditional elementary programs in other Providence elementary schools.

The School and the Community

The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. school is a community school in the sense that in addition to the regular day school program run by the public school system, there are a number of programs developed and used during and after school by the community itself. The primary organization which develops and conducts these programs is the Lippitt Hill Tutorial, Incorporated. In addition, there is the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community School Learning Center, which operates an after-school experimental program.

Lippitt Hill Tutorial describes itself as an independently financed organization that offers supplementary programs to the public school system of Providence. Since its small beginnings in 1963, with a volunteer college student tutoring program in the after school hours in the Doyle Avenue school, Lippitt Hill Tutorial has grown to include, in 1970, some 300 volunteers and trainees working in 21 schools in Providence, with an annual budget in excess of $40,000, most of which is obtained locally and privately.

The after-school program presently operated by Lippitt Hill Tutorial, involves approximately 95 students from three public high schools, and three area private schools, as well as local college students who work in various schools with pupils on a one to one basis once or twice per week during the school year. The philosophy of this program suggests that no child fits neatly into a category. He needs a tutor who can see him as he is and can respond with enjoyment and affection. The major benefit of tutoring lies in the relationship between the tutor and child.

The majority of the programs offered by Lippitt Hill Tutorial now operate during the regular school day, although many of these programs began as after-school activities.

Volunteer programs

The school volunteer program, perhaps the most successful and ambitious day school program, involves some 150 trained volunteers working in 21 schools all over the city. Asserting that a close link to the classroom teacher and to other specialists within the school makes tutors more effective, Lippitt Hill Tutorial began placing trained volunteers first in school libraries and other non-classroom positions. In 1967, volunteers were placed in the classroom as teachers requested them. Volunteers work closely with the children, individually and in small groups, based on teacher recommendations of needs. During the past year there were as many as 75 additional requests that went unfulfilled for lack of personnel. Extensive training programs have been developed utilizing area educators. Volunteers are exposed to both experimental and tested elements of modern education. The 1969-70 annual report of Lippitt Hill Tutorial suggests that "School volunteers gain tremendous understanding of problems teachers face; they are more knowledgeable advocates for the public school system, and through attendance at the training course as well as through classroom experience, they begin to see that many of the college professors as well as professionals within the city schools are working often against great odds to improve schools." *(R 7)*

A second program involves creative dramatics in the classrooms, with costs for these activities being shared with Title I; a third day school program involves some 18 black high school students tutoring pupils with special learning needs in six classrooms of the King school. Individual and small group instruction and tutorial help is given to each child daily. The tutors are paid and given academic credit for their work, which proceeds under the guidance of a resource teacher and a counselor.

A fourth program includes provision of money to the Providence school system to hire buses for specific trips in connection with the new elemen-

tary social studies program recently developed for the system.

The newest of the programs involves tutoring of high school students who need extra help. Close to 30 college students from the area are involved in this activity.

In addition, the leadership of the Lippitt Hill Tutorial claims that the financial independence of the organization has contributed in no small measure to the success of the program. Careful planning, efficient administration and programmatic success help explain the success of the Lippitt Hill Tutorial activities.

The acceptance of the community's educational activities by the school system is the result of a gradual recognition of the value of community involvement in public education. And too, the Lippitt Hill Tutorial has repeatedly demonstrated its value to the school system, sometimes in the face of school department resistance. The use of paraprofessionals is now accepted.

One of the problems yet remaining for the community is how to deal with that portion of the professional staff of a school that is not involved in tutorial activities, or for that matter, with those teachers who use assistants improperly. Only the continuing dialogue between school system and tutorial services will resolve such problems. The King school and the East Side schools have already begun to deal effectively with these issues.

The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community School Learning Center is an after-school program funded by Title I and OEO monies, administered by the Providence public school system. Begun in the summer of 1968, the program describes itself as departing from previous experimental practices in Providence. It is more loosely structured and is run with the assistance of parents. There is a clear, innovative intent to this program which can be described as supplementary to and somewhat more flexible than the regular school program. The community school programs work

with small groups of pupils in different settings and utilize a variety of organizational patterns. A central goal of this program is to become supported and adopted into the regular day school program. The program is popular with the youngsters and struggles under severe financial limitations.

The future of community educational programs is difficult to predict. Continuing activities open new horizons. There is seemingly no end to the need for meaningful community involvement in public education.

Conclusions

An assessment of the impact of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. school program and related activities on the East Side must be made relative to the nature of public education in the city of Providence and the surrounding area.

Impact of the King school

The development of the school seems to have brought forward a sense of total community for the whole area of the East Side. There was a model community involvement which has received statewide recognition. The community, through its actions, forced the School Committee to alter its policy with reference to new school construction and development, which might not have occurred had the community not stepped in. (The only school building constructed since the King school has incorporated many of its features.) The King school development activities have had an impact on school policy for the entire city. (As of the fall of 1970, the entire elementary reading program was to have been non-graded. It is expected that the math and language arts curricula will also be changed in a similar manner.)

Of even greater significance is the fact that the policies and practices of school administration have been altered by the activities which resulted in the establishment of the King school. Program change and curriculum development have been accepted as essential for the Providence school system, which has been operating with old norms and forms.

Learning centers, continuous progress education, classroom assistants and other innovations are now in use. System planning and inservice training are gaining support. The King school has a reputation for educational excellence, educational change, experimentation and innovative practice. While there is greater attribution to more innovative features than actually exist, the fact remains that the King school is a focal point

for the discussion of public education in Providence and the surrounding area. Requests for speakers at various educational meetings in the State come in increasing numbers to faculty and administrators alike. Answering requests for help is an established part of the Tutorial staff's work.

School as a model

As positive as this impact has been, one must note that while the school has been in operation for three years, no systematic evaluation of pupil attitude and achievement has yet accompanied the school's operation. There is available information from parents in the community which suggests that the positive, flexible atmosphere of the school leaves youngsters who attend it less tense and fearful in other non-school activities. (Data to support this contention came from informal discussions with area parents.)

Need for evaluation

While the Coordinating Principal of the East Side schools reports that the pupils are beginning to show major gains in several areas, a definitive statement must await completion of data collection and analysis which still has not been done. A statewide testing program is under consideration. A comparative study of achievement change within the East Side as well as with a comparable area school should begin to provide some much needed answers.

Limitations of school

There are several obvious limitations and difficulties in the development of the King school. First, since numerous changes occured in the planning and development of the school organization, the initial fit between the physical facility and the use to which it was put was strained. As

time goes on, it seems clear that the building has a flexibility which extends beyond original expectations, and functions well as a community center.

A few staff inadequacies remain in spite of repeated efforts to induce change. Some traditional teaching practices (closed classrooms and some homogeneous grouping) are still in use at the school. However, a large portion of the program operates with open classrooms and heterogeneous groupings. Also, some members of the faculty have made better adjustment than others to the concepts and practices of continuous progress education.

For a number of reasons, including the rising school age population of the East Side and the reduction of the number of East Side pupils in private schools, the King school, with a capacity of 650, contained 810 pupils in the 1969-70 school year. However, the change to a K-2 school has corrected this. As an economy move in the fall of 1970, the busing program has been curtailed by the School Committee, and now involves only pupils who live a mile or more from school. The community is opposed to this move and is arguing in opposition at School Committee meetings.

As the King school enters a new phase of its development, those involved with its beginnings imply that it was a bigger job than any of them had imagined. All seem highly respectful of institutional change and development procedures and requirements. A standard leading toward excellence has been set, however. That the King school experience was and is successful is a tribute to the tireless efforts of both school and community leaders; it provides an excellent model for others to follow.

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3. Coleman-McDonald Report containing educational specifications for Lippitt Hill School, 1963, Providence School Department.
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6. Educational File, *Providence Journal*, re: Lippitt Hill School, 1963-1967, Providence School Committee.
7. Annual Report, Lippitt Hill Tutorial, Inc., Providence, R.I., 1968-69.
8. An Educational Proposal submitted to the Fund for the Advancement of Education, Providence School Committee, Providence, R.I., November, 1963.
9. The following is extracted from an Educational Proposal submitted to the Fund for the Advancement of Education, Providence School Committee, Providence, R.I. November 1963, p. 4:

    1. To initiate and develop a curriculum structure specifically geared to meet the academic needs of students having a wide disparity in social, economic and cultural backgrounds.
    2. To set up a thoroughly integrated school facility replacing schools which at the present time are segregated on a de facto basis.
    3. To develop a total school-community program which will insure the continuation of the aforementioned facility on an integrated basis.

4. To evolve a selective process and training program for personnel aimed at preparing teachers for participation in the project.
5. To encourage parental involvement in the project by means of initiating school aide program with training.
6. To develop a program whereby parents would be provided instruction in academic areas consistent with the subject matter being taught to their children.
7. To put into operation an interim program designed to prepare the potential pupils of the new school for participation in the new curriculum upon their entry to the facility.

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